

Mr. Cowan objected.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Hughes having made the statment that it was done and that being denied by others, Mr. Hughes has the right to state the ground, whatever it was worth, which made him say it in the first place.

Mr. HUGHES.—Mr. Pearne told me in the spring of 1896, told me in a jocular way—I said to him, he being a good Liberal——

Mr. Cowan objected.

*By Mr. McClure:*

Q. Do you swear to this?—A. I object to your saying this; I am on oath.

Q. I propose to make my objection; I say this, a more monstrous proceeding was never heard of, a man to come on oath to make this statement which Mr. Hughes makes, and as one member of the committee I object that a man should come on oath and make wild and random statements.—A. Where am I making wild and random statements?

*By Mr. Cowan:*

Q. You say it was true and then you say it is not?—A. And I repeat here it is absolutely untrue. Here is what I say is absolutely untrue——

Q. You say it is absolutely untrue?—A. Yes.

Q. Then, I ask you how you know that, and you say because Pearne told you?—A. Here, sir, is what I say is absolutely untrue, made out of whole cloth. He says my statement is absolutely untrue and made out of whole cloth. I say it is not, and Mr. Pearne is the gentleman who gave me the statement. We are old friends, and I knew he would vote against me, but in a jocular way he told me I had better get a move on, that McLaughlin was looking up these claims. I may say, here, that I know the water was not raised at the time Mr. McLaughlin speaks of, because I frequently drive the road, and there is a large creek flowing in from Pearne's place where the horses drive through, and when the water was up at the dam, not speaking of the spring floods, one couldn't drive through the creek, and you can't do so to-day. Formerly we could drive through and water the horses. It is not worth while wasting or taking up the time about that. Here is the point I come to now, and here is the point where I think the government is connected with this matter. It is not a very serious matter on the part of the government, but here Mr. McLaughlin states, and, by the way, permit me to make this point, Mr. Barron, or Barron & Steers, were the government agents up to the last of July, a year ago, Mr. McLaughlin was acting in his capacity either as a person representing the party and holding the patronage of the riding——

Mr. COWAN.—I object to this, it is not evidence.

The CHAIRMAN.—You had better give evidence and argue the point afterwards.

Mr. HUGHES.—I am coming to this point, that he was acting as the legal adviser of these people; up to this time he was the people's agent and afterwards he was the government agent. This is where the point comes in in connection with these cheques. Mr. McLaughlin swears, "as a matter of fact," in answer to the question how these cheques were given to these farmers, he says, "as a matter of fact it was nearly all done at Fenelon Falls, where we have an office, and where I go once a week. We handed the farmer over his cheque and he would go down the street to a little bank and bring us up the amount of our account."

The CHAIRMAN.—I submit the cheques. Here is a cheque, Sackett's cheque. It was presented to the Dominion Bank at Lindsay. R. R. Graham's cheque was presented by R. R. Graham through Moss & Boyd's firm. Pott's cheque didn't pass through McLaughlin's hands, at least there is no evidence that it passed through his hands. Mr. Isaac's cheque is here, Mr. Chairman, and is presented by the firm of McLaughlin & McDerimid to the Dominion Bank in Lindsay, and not in Fenelon